

Bush River Community Council

Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 18, 2013

Attendees: William Conlon, Mike Carr, Patricia Gougally, Rebecca Jessop, Sallie Filkins, Ryan Burbey, Lt. Hopkins, Chris Henn, Jamie Meier, on behalf of Councilwoman Lisanti, Dion Guthrie, Lt. HJ Dougherty.

Harford County Sheriff Office: Deputy Hugh John Dougherty reported that Captain Swain was promoted to Major and leaving the Southern Precinct to become part of Internal Affairs office. He will be replaced by Sheriff's Department Captain Jonathon Krass. This area is designated as sector 20: Abingdon, Belcamp, Havre de Grace. While crime has been lower in the past 28 days, robberies have gone from 6 to 9. Harford County is well below the national average for crime. He also reminded us that with the spring months coming this is the time of year residents forgets to lock cars, sheds and homes. Remember that crime is everywhere just looking for the opportunity to make it easy to get. If you do not want thieves to walk off with your possessions, lock them up. Keep it out of view in your cars.

Harford County Education Association (HCEA): Ryan Burbey gave an update on the Local Teachers Union status. He stated that Harford County needs to add \$22 million dollars into funding of our schools or we will be in grave danger of losing 200 jobs for teachers in our schools, with this many jobs going we will see a dramatic change in Harford County schools. Right now the budget is in the hands of the County Executive: David Craig. You can send an email to him stating you want an increase in education funding. Send to: drccraig@harfordcountymd.gov or countyexecutive@harfordcountymd.gov.

Another problem is the fact that Harford County lost \$5 million dollars in taxable wealth from the State of MD because the income of Harford County salary earners was higher than in previous years. The #1 employer in Harford County is the public school system. #2 is APG. A cut in programs means no extras for students. Transportation to magnet schools could be impacted. The HCEA is working to get the lunchtime of children in school changed from 20 minutes to 30 minutes. The current 20 minute lunch period includes transit to and from the cafeteria, leaving about 10 minutes to eat. They feel this is not long enough for children to eat a proper meal.

County Council Representative from District A: Dion Guthrie spoke about the ***Watershed Protection and Restoration Program House Bill (HB987)*** that was before the State Legislature and the subsequent legislation 13-12 before the County Council a vote. This Bill will help protect the Chesapeake Bay. There are 24 Counties in the State of MD. Of those 24 counties only 10 counties will pay into the fund to start. Those counties are: *Anne Arundel County

*Baltimore City *Baltimore County *Carroll County *Charles County *Frederick County
*Harford County *Howard County *Montgomery County *Prince George's County

The Watershed Protection and Restoration Program: Was signed into law in April 2012. The program establishes a system of storm water remediation fees and a local watershed protection and restoration fund (WPRF) that must be implemented by counties and municipalities that are subject to a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase I Municipal Separate Storm. All counties affected are establishing a payment plan for their residents. Harford County Council is looking at the fee of \$125.00 per household. There is also a suggestion to only have to pay 10% to start until a task force can figure out how much each county resident will really have to pay. Currently Municipalities are exempt so Havre de Grace, Aberdeen, and Bel Air residents will not have to pay. Fees for business, churches and fraternal organizations rates are too great for them to pay and the people who pay would be double taxed at home and on the organization they belong too. Over the next 3 years \$70 million needs to be raised to help save the Chesapeake Bay.

Center for the Arts for Harford County: Rebecca R. Jessop talked about a proposed building to house a Center for the Arts stating there is a great need for a location in the county to study the disciplines of music, dance, theatre and visual traditions and literary arts. The location for the building would be on donated land known as the Graham farm. Mrs. Graham left a 69 acre tract of land to be used for passive recreation and 41 acres to be used for the Center for the Arts. The land is currently valued at \$17 million. Ms Jessop stated a need exists for 1200 seat, 400 seat, and 100 seat auditoriums and Exhibit rooms, and the new building will accommodate these needs. The economic benefits will be a 7-1 return on the dollar. They will be able to hold exhibits because of the temperature control rooms that they have not been able to house. They only have 10 years to develop the land. They are already in the 3rd year and have 7 more years to go. They feel there is an urgent need to build now. If the project is not started soon the property will go back to the estate and get developed for 200-400 homes. So the big question is how will Harford County pay for this project? Center proponents believe the Center would generate enough revenue to pay for itself in the future, and that a Center for the Arts is needed in Harford County. Many businesses and organizations would use the venue to hold events such as APG; the hospital holds Galas every year and every other year they go to Baltimore County for the event. She suggested that a hotel tax would offset the cost to County residents and that other Counties have a 12.5% hotel tax.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned. Next meeting of the BRCC will be May 20th, at 6:30pm.

Submitted by:

Chris Henn, Council Member

